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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to explore the relationship between anomia (a feeling of alienation, of being cut off from society), attitude toward adult education, and nonparticipation in formal adult education activities. The subjects of the study were adults who lived in a specific area in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which had the following characteristics: The working inhabitants were mainly blue-collar workers, over 99% were white, and formal adult education activities were available in or near the area. Out of a systematic sample of 201 households, 147 adults responded to an interview schedule, a response rate of 73%. Conclusions based on statistical analyses of the findings were as follows: The higher the level of anomia a person has, the less favorable his or her attitude toward adult education; the attitude toward adult education of nonparticipants in formal adult education activities is significantly lower than that of participants; and only those nonparticipants who are 26.5 years or older are more likely to have higher levels of anomia than participants. A solid majority of nonparticipants surveyed indicated a desire to learn. Therefore, it is suggested that adult educators examine the effectiveness of their methods for extending their services to those adults who do not participate in formal adult education. A more personal approach to reaching nonparticipants--through acquaintances, friends, and relatives or through organizations to which adults belong--may be more effective with blue-collar workers. (LMS)

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THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ANOMIA, ATTITUDE TOWARD ADULT EDUCATION, AND NONPARTICIPATION IN FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

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Introduction

Clarification of the relationships between attitudes and nonparticipation of adults in formal adult education activities has been suggested by Booth (5) and by Douglah and Moss (9) as a fruitful area of research to provide a better understanding of nonparticipation. Yet, there has been a dearth of reported empirical research directed at obtaining information about the attitudes of those adults who do not participate in adult education activities. However, research efforts (5;6;9;11;14;19;20) have uncovered several demographic characteristics (e.g. age) which are related to nonparticipation. These relationships point to a possible relationship between one attitude, a form of alienation, and nonparticipation. This attitude is anomia (27). In addition, the nature of attitudes suggests that a relationship may exist between nonparticipation and a person's attitude toward adult education. These suggested relationships and the lack of information about the attitudes of adults who do not participate in formal adult education activities stimulated the initiation and direction of this study. The purpose of the study was to explore the relationships among anomia, attitude toward adult education, and nonparticipation in formal adult education activities.

Statement of the Problem

The various facets of the problem on which this study focused can be stated as follows. Do adults who do not participate in formal adult education activities have a higher level of anomia than those who do participate? Do adults who do not participate in formal adult education activities have a less favorable attitude toward adult education than those who do participate? Is level of anomia inversely related to the degree of favorable attitude toward adult education?

Review of Research and Hypotheses Development

A review of the research literature in the fields of Adult Education and Sociology has pointed up the possibility of a relationship between anomia and nonparticipation in formal adult education activities. The concept of anomia was developed by Srole (27) for his research on social integration. He used the term "anomia" to identify "self-to-others distance" and "self-to-others"alienation. To tap this attitude, he developed a five item scale which was designed to be sensitive to a person's perceptions of: 1) his/her relationship with government leaders, 2) the predictability of the social order, 3) the present condition of the average man in society, 4) what life has to offer, and 5) the predictability and supportiveness of personal relationships.

Analysis of the research results pertaining to anomia indicated that higher levels of anomia were found to be associated positively with:

1) lower levels of formal education (2;7;8;13;26),
2) low status occupations (2;22;29),
3) low income (2;15;23),
4) nonparticipation in formal groups (8;15;25),
5) older age (2;3).

In those studies in which a socioeconomic status indicator (usually based on a combination of education level, occupation, and/or income) was used, higher levels of anomia were found to be associated with

lower socioeconomic status (3;18;27).

An analysis of the research results pertaining to nonparticipation in adult education activities indicated that nonparticipation was found to be associated positively with:

1) lower levels of formal education (5;6;9;11;14;19),
2) low status occupations (5;11;14;19),
3) low income (11),
4) nonparticipation in formal groups (19),
5) older age (5;11;14).

A comparison of these two profiles suggested that higher levels of anomia may be associated with nonparticipation in adult education activities. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

> Adults who do not participate in formal adult education activities have higher levels of anomia than those who do participate. (H1)

Finifter (10) points out that anomia is "a pervasive attitude toward society at large." However, people also possess attitudes with more specific referents. Because of the focus of this study, the referent of interest was adult education. This question was raised: is a generalized attitude toward society related to specific attitudes toward education and associated activities which are considered integral parts of the society?

Education is viewed by many adults as a major means of achieving success in our society (11:242). Yet, a large number of adults don't participate in formal adult education activities (11). Perhaps, a general feeling of not being part of the society, of being alienated from others, has a halo effect. An adult may see education as a means of getting ahead for those who are more involved in the society. In other words, if a person views education from the standpoint of being on the periphery or not part of the society, his/her view may be that it works for "them" but it won't work for me. Thus, his/her attitude toward adult education is likely to be less favorable than the attitude of a person who has a sense of belonging to society and of being able to enjoy the advantages of that belongingness. On the other hand, an adult who possesses a less favorable or negative attitude toward adult education may feel that educational institutions are not responsive to his/her needs and therefore may feel more anomic. These two views of the possible relationship between anomia and attitude toward adult are presented to exemplify the symmetrical relationship that was suggested. It was hypothesized that:

> The level of anomia possessed by adults is inversely related to the degree of favorable attitude they have toward adult education. (H2)

The nature of an attitude is such that it identifies a tendency or predisposition to respond negatively or positively toward a referent. At times, an attitude is reflected in a person's approach or avoidance behavior with respect to the attitudinal referent. This nature of attitudes plus the previously hypothesized relationships between anomia and nonparticipation and between anomia and attitude toward adult education suggested a third hypothesis. It was hypothesized that:

> Adults who do not participate in formal adult education activities have a less favorable attitude toward adult education than those who do participate. (H3)

Population and Research Methods

The people who made up the population that was studied had to

possess four characteristics. They had to: 1) be eighteen years of age or older, 2) live in an urban area, 3) live in an area in which adult education facilities and activities were readily available, and 4) live in an area in which a preponderance of the working inhabitants were employed in blue-collar occupations. A population of adults who lived on the south side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin in an area which formed a crudely shaped rectangle approximately two and one-half miles wide and three and one-half miles long was selected for the study because the population possessed the desired characteristics. It should be noted that over 99 percent of the people in the area were white.

A sample of 201 households was systematically selected from a frame based on the housing units in the area which contained the population under study. The selection of an adult in each household involved a procedure designed to ensure that the sex and age distributions in the sample would be comparable to those in the population.

An interview schedule was developed and used so that the procedures for gathering attitudinal, behavioral, and situational data from each respondent would be standardized. Items from the Anomia Scale (27) and from the Attitude Toward Adult Education Scale developed by Adolph and Whaley (1) were used to gather attitudinal information for testing the hypotheses. The items in the two scales were integrated to avoid response set occuring in the responses to the items in the Anomia Scale. This integrating of items was based on recommendations made by Bonjean et. al.(4). The first item in the Anomia Scale, which pertained to the R's attitude toward public officials, was reworded slightly because Robinson and Shaver (24:259) indicated that the activity of writing had been removed from the item. Interviewing took place from early March to late May in 1975.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and cross-tabulations were calculated for the purposes of describing the sample and making inferences about population parameters. Hypotheses were tested through the use of product-moment correlation, t-tests, and multiple regression analysis. A five percent level of confidence was established as the minimum level for statistical significance.

Basic Assumptions

The following assumptions are made for the purpose of this study. An adult is a person eighteen years of age or older. A blue-collar worker is a person who usually works as a craftsman, foreman, operative, laborer, service worker, or household worker. A blue-collar household is a household in which the head-of-the-household is a blue-collar worker. A white-collar worker is a person who usually works as a professional, technician, manager, official, proprietor, clerk, or salesperson. A white-collar household is a household in which the head-of-the-household is a white-collar worker.

Formal adult education activities are those learning experiences that: 1) have an educator or training specialist providing inputs into the planning, developing and implementing of them, 2) are conducted under the auspices of some organization or group, 3) are usually identified as courses, workshops, institutes, conferences or training programs, and 4) are developed and conducted for adults as previously defined. (This definition covers a wide range of educational activities including courses, both credit and noncredit, which are offered in

colleges, universities, and technical schools as well as training courses in business and industry.) A participant in formal adult education activities is an adult who has participated in at least eight sessions of formal educational activities during the two and one-quarter year period prior to the interview. This time period was established because interviewing took place from early March to late May in 1975. Thus, respondents who had participated in formal educational activities during the Spring of 1973 had all their sessions counted for the purpose of categorizing them. A nonparticipant in formal adult education activities is an adult who did not participate in formal educational activities during the two and one-quarter years prior to the interview.

Data Analysis

One hundred forty-seven adults responded to the interview schedule, a response rate of seventy-three percent. Information from three interview schedules was only used in the analysis of the relationship between anomia and attitude toward adult education. This approach was taken because three interview schedules were obtained from R's who had participated in less than eight sessions of formal educational activities during the two and one-quarter years prior to the interview. By definition, the R's were neither participants nor nonparticipants. Therefore, their data could not be used to test the two hypotheses which pertained to nonparticipants.

Characteristics of the Respondents

Initial analysis of the data indicated that 66% of the R's were nonparticipants. Of this group, 60% had not participated in formal educational activities since completing their schooling during childhood and adolescence. Among the participants, 53% were enrolled in a formal educational activity at the time of the interview and 78% had been enrolled in a formal educational activity within a year prior to the interview.

Fifty-two percent of the nonparticipants and 57% of the participants were female. Forty-two percent of the nonparticipants and 82% of the participants were less than forty-five years of age. Forty-three percent of the nonparticipants and 20% of the participants had not completed high school. Seventy-seven percent of the nonparticipants and 67% of the participants lived in blue-collar households. Fifty-nine percent of the nonparticipants and 45% of the participants lived in households with annual family incomes of less than $13,000. Sixty-four percent of the nonparticipants and 95% of the participants said they would like to learn more about something or would like to do something better. However, only 26% of the nonparticipants and 47% of the participants recently had thought of enrolling in some type of adult education activity.

Attitude Scales

The responses of the R's to the attitude scales produced the following results. Scores on the Anomia Scale ranged from 0 to 5. They were obtained by assigning a one to each item that received an agree response and then summing the ones. Scores on the Attitude Toward Adult Education Scale ranged from 3.21 to 7.73. They were obtained by summing the numerical values associated with the items

that received an agree response. The value for each item was established by Adolph and Whaley (1).

The performance of the Anomia Scale was assessed by testing the scale for reproducibility (28:117). The test yielded a coefficient of reproducibility of 0.87. The Attitude Toward Adult Education Scale was divided into comparable halves and tested for reliability. A split-half reliability of 0.798 was obtained using the Brown-Spearman formula (16:168).

Anomia and Nonparticipation

Analysis of the data which was related to the hypotheses provided the following findings. The mean anomia score (2.61) for nonparticipants was significantly greater than the mean anomia score (1.54) for participants; $t=5.127$; $df=142$; $p<.0005$ (one-tailed). To explore further the relationship between anomia and nonparticipation in formal adult education activities, additional tests of this relationship were conducted. In these tests, control for another variable found to be significantly related to anomia was introduced. The control variables were age, education, household type, and annual family income. Regression analysis was used to introduce controls for the continuous variables of age and education. This analysis permitted the exploring and testing of the interaction between the covariate (age or education) and the nonparticipation-participation variable, and if this interaction was not significant, the conducting of an analysis of covariance. However, the results of the analysis of covariance have to be interpreted with caution because the assumption of randomization with respect to group member assignment and treatment assignment cannot be met in this study (12:266), (21:206). The procedures in Kerlinger and Pedhazur (12:Chapter 10) were used to test for interaction, analyze the interaction when necessary, and if appropriate to conduct an analysis of covariance. This analysis provided the data required for caculating adjusted means which were then subjected to a t-test.

A test of the relationship between anomia and nonparticipation with education controlled indicated that the adjusted mean anomia score (2.51) for nonparticipants was significantly greater than the adjusted mean anomia score (1.60) for participants; $t=3.94$; $df=141$; $p<.0005$ (one-tailed). Because age and the nonparticipation-participation variable were found to interact, an analysis of covariance could not be used to control for age. Instead, the Johnson-Neyman Technique (12:256-58) was used to determine whether or not there was an age at which the difference levels became significant. The results indicated that below approximately 26.5 years of age the difference between anomia levels of nonparticipants and participants was not significant, but at approximately 26.5 years of age the difference in levels became significant and continued to increase as age increased.

To test the relationship between anomia and nonparticipation with household type controlled, the R's were divided into two groups, those who resided in blue-collar households and those who resided in white-collar households. Among the R's from blue-collar households, the mean anomia score (2.77) for nonparticipants was significantly greater than the mean anomia score (1.70) for participants; $t=3.75$; $df=104$; $p<.0005$ (one-tailed). Likewise among R's from white-collar households, the mean anomia score (2.0) for nonparticipants was significantly greater than the mean anomia score (.812) for participants; $t=3.169$; $df=34$; $p<.0025$ (one-tailed).

To test the relationship between anomia and nonparticipation with level of income controlled, the R's were divided into two groups, those with annual family incomes below $13,000 and those with annual family incomes of $13,000 or more. Among the lower income R's, the mean anomia score (2.77) for nonparticipants was significantly greater than the mean anomia score (1.76) for participants; t=2.78; df=75; p<.005 (one-tailed). Among the higher income R's, the mean anomia score (2.38) for nonparticipants was significantly greater than the mean anomia score (1.14 for participants; t=4.45; df=32; p<.0005 (one-tailed). H1 was supported for adults 26.5 years of age or older.

Anomia and Attitude Toward Adult Education

The relationship between anomia and attitude toward adult education was examined through the use of product-moment correlation. This examination produced a correlation coefficient of -.496; df=145; p<.01. H2 was supported. The square of the correlation coefficient indicated that anomia explained 24.6% of the variance in attitude toward adult education and vice versa. A comparison of the results of regressing attitude toward adult education scores on anomia scores in a linear regression model and in a model without linear restriction indicated that the relationship between anomia and attitude toward adult education is linear.

Attitude Toward Adult Education and Nonparticipation

The mean attitude toward adult education score (6.38) for nonparticipants was significantly less than the mean score (6.83) for participants; t=3.60;df=71; p<.0005 (one-tailed). Additional tests of the relationship between attitude toward adult education and nonparticipation were conducted while controlling for either age, education or household type, each of which was found to be significantly related to attitude toward adult education. The test of the relationship between attitude toward adult education and nonparticipation using analysis of covariance to control for age produced an adjusted mean attitude toward adult education score (6.40) for nonparticipants which was significantly less than the adjusted mean score (6.77) for participants; t=2.43; df=141; p<.013 (one-tailed). The test of the relationship between attitude toward adult education and nonparticipation using analysis of covariance to control for level of education produced an adjusted mean attitude toward adult education score (6.43) for nonparticipants which was significantly less than the adjusted mean score (6.72) for participants; t=2.05; df=141; p<.025 (one-tailed).

Among the R's from blue-collar households, the mean attitude toward adult education score (6.31) for nonparticipants was significantly less than the mean score (6.76) for participants; t=2.80; df=52; p<.005 (one-tailed). Among the R's from white-collar households, the mean attitude toward adult education score (6.67) for nonparticipants was significantly less than the mean score (6.97) for participants; t=1.76; df=34; p<.05 (one-tailed). H3 was supported.

Conclusions

Inferences are limited to the population from which the sample was drawn. Only generalized inductions can be made about adults who are not part of the population under study but, have characteristics

which are comparable to those of this population.

The nonparticipants in formal adult education activities generally are older, less highly educated, more likely to live in blue-collar households, and more likely to have lower family incomes than participants. A solid majority of nonparticipants have a desire to learn. Yet it appears that only a small minority of them give thought to satisfying this desire for learning by participating in formal adult education activities.

With respect to the relationships among adult attitudes and nonparticipation in formal adult education activities, the following conclusions are suggested by the data analysis. In the adult population, there is an inverse relationship between level of anomia and the degree of favorable attitude toward adult education. In general, as the level of anomia gets higher attitude toward adult education becomes less favorable.

Both anomia and attitude toward adult education are related to nonparticipation in formal adult education activities. Nonparticipants are more likely to have a less favorable attitude toward adult education than participants. The results of the analysis indicate that the relationship between anomia and nonparticipation has to be qualified due to the interaction between age and nonparticipation. Because of this qualification, only those nonparticipants in formal adult education activities who are 26.5 years of age or older are more likely to have higher levels of anomia than participants.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study points up the relationships among anomia, attitude toward adult education, and nonparticipation in formal adult education activities. These relationships have to be viewed as symmetrical; that is the influence is bidirectional. The degree to which these relationships my be asymmetrical is not answered by the results of the study. Therefore, questions which go beyond the limits of this study may be asked. For example, to what extent does nonparticipation in adult education activities influence anomia level and attitude toward adult education? To what extent does the interaction between nonparticipation and age influence the level of anomia? To what extent does the interaction between age and participation influence anomia level? To what extent do higher levels of anomia or less favorable attitudes toward adult education contribute to nonparticipation in adult education activities? Does participating in adult education activities reduce anomia and engender a more favorable attitude toward adult education? Do different types of adult education activities have different impacts on anomia levels? Do different types of adult education activities engender different attitudes toward adult education? Each of these questions is a problem which can provide the basis for further research.

Suggestions for Adult Educators

If adult educators who presently serve the population under study are interested in serving as many clientele as possible, they should consider the findings of this study. This suggestion also applies to adult educators who presently do not serve the subject population, but are interested in doing so. The findings suggest that many of

the nonparticipants have a desire to learn. However, many of these same nonparticipants, especially those in blue-collar households, possess at least a moderate level of "self-to-others alienation" and as a result may feel "cut-off" from the rest of the world. In addition, the nonparticipants' attitudes toward adult education tend to be less favorable than participants. These attitudes have the potential for negatively influencing the nonparticipants' responses to the attempts of adult educators to attract them to adult education activities. Many of these attempts consist of circulating catalogs and brochures through the mail and/or advertising on the radio and television.

Possibly, a more personal approach to reaching nonparticipants could penetrate the attitudes these people possess and could provide encouragement to at least sample adult education offerings. The suggestions of London et. al. (14) and Miller (17) might provide some insights into dealing with the problem. London et. al. indicate that more personal lines of communications through acquaintances, friends, and relatives should be more effective with blue-collar workers. Miller proposes more personal lines of communications through organizations or associations to which adults belong.

Therefore, the investigator suggests that less emphasis be placed on the usual marketing methods used to attract people to adult education activities and that more emphasis be placed on the following procedures. Adult educators should ask participants in formal adult education activities to contact and encourage their friends, relatives, and acquaintances in the area to investigate and participate in adult education offerings. Adult educators should also work through organizations such as PTA's, church groups and neighborhood groups to attract nonparticipants to adult education activities. Finally, adult educators themselves, if possible, and/or other contact people should circulate in the community and make personal contact with adults to indicate the availability of adult education facilities, to explain the types of offerings presently available, and to express a concern for the interests and needs of the people.

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